'The last thing I want to do is get in an argument with a dead J. Edgar Hoover.'

— Dist. Atty. Henry Wade

myself to have this clarified and the record set straight."

Wade speculated the whole matter had resulted from garbled communication between Hoover and Rankin since he recalled nothing of the statements concerning FBI methods in paying informants and never felt Oswald worked for any government agency.

"I think Mr. Hoover's right about that," Wade said. "There must have been a misunderstanding because they didn't just send us money to buy information any way we liked. We had to account for it, no question about that."

Wade surmised that the bureau research on his FBI background "was probably them trying to discredit somebody," but he added that "the last thing I want to do is get in an argument with a dead J. Edgar Hoover."

The files of the Warren Commission, which in the past few years have been declassified from the National Archives, verify that Wade's funds for informants were strictly monitored as Hoover claimed, which perhaps was one factor on the commission's determination that Oswald had no accomplices in the assassination in the fall of 1963.

Apparently shortly after Hoover learned of the remarks Wade was reported to have made, the word went out from headquarters that the district attorney was questioning the bureau's position on Oswald and that contacts with him were to be correct but severely limited.

Marching orders for the Dallas field peared highly concerned about how the conduct of the district attorney's office would affect the credibility of the FBI's emerging conclusion that Oswald and Ruby were not involved in a conspiracy and did not know each other. The major problem was how to appear cooperative without giving the local officials ammunition to create what the FBI felt was an inflammatory situation.

"Asst. Dist. Atty. William Alexander has stated that the state presentation would 'make no effort to correct the impressions' a jury may receive that Oswald and Ruby were part of a Communist conspiracy," a memo dated Jan. 9, 1964 from top FBI official Alex Rosen said. "He inferred that he felt a jury would be most likely to convict and give Ruby a substantial sentence with the belief there was an Oswald-Ruby connection."

But in a handwritten message at the bottom of the memo Hoover personally authorized limited cooperation rather than leaving it up to the Warren Commission for fear the bureau would be blamed for withholding information and evidence.

"I see in this endless delays upon the part of Rankin in reaching a decision," Hoover observed. "The Texas authorities will blame the FBI for hedging — not Rankin."